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Robert Yeo · *Singapore*

A DRAGON FOR THE FAMILY

Hushed, we hovered between rabbit and dragon,
between a whitish squeak and flaming breath.
When you declined to be a rabbit, like
your father, the hush dissolved, and I was pleased
knowing how auspicious the dragon is.
I was prepared to wait, but it's lovely
to be scorched so soon, as long as you will
promise not to burn our house to the ground.

Girl or boy, your sex didn't really matter.
I'm not the traditional Chinese father
who needs a son to continue his line
and swell his clan. My brothers may line up,
and my clan of two-and-a-half million,
though small, is big enough for me, for us.
I don't know whether small is beautiful,
but since we have no choice, let's make it so.

Sha-min, sweetheart, you know this prayer
I offer you is really not a prayer as
you are born in a good year in a good place,
the prospect of water-rationing notwithstanding.
Say rather that I'm offering you a hope,
one of many hopes; and so as not to seem
arbitrary, let there be three,
as this is the year of the three-clawed dragon.